

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item F-3
February 9, 2016
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Jim Cason
Commissioner Pat Keon
Commissioner Vince Lago
Vice Mayor Frank Quesada
Commissioner Jeannett Slesnick

City Staff

City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
City Attorney, Craig E. Leen
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Planning and Zoning Director, Ramon Trias

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item F-3 [0:00:00 a.m.]

Discussion regarding improving Citizens access to City information by making Board of Architects submittals and Board Meeting information easily accessible to residents online.

Mayor Cason: Let's go on to F-3. This is Commissioner Lago's item. And the Vice Mayor has to leave at 12 so...

City Attorney Leen: Can I ask you for one thing, Mr. Mayor? Could you do a resolution of support for the City that basically supports what we've already done, but in going to the County

Commission, that I could bring to them that you support the City's efforts in this matter and you, you know, request the County settle the matter?

Mayor Cason: Sure.

City Attorney Leen: And that you support our representatives that are going.

Mayor Cason: Okay.

City Attorney Leen: So, basically, designating them.

Commissioner Lago: So move.

Mayor Cason: Alright, Commissioner Lago makes the motion.

Commissioner Keon: I second it.

Mayor Cason: And Commissioner Keon seconds. City Clerk.

Commissioner Slesnick: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

Commissioner Lago: Yes.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yes.

Mayor Cason: Yes.

(Vote: 5-0)

City Attorney Leen: Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

Commissioner Lago: Just my item, F-3, Mayor, if I may. I'll be brief. I know we're pressed for time in regards to discussions regarding improving citizens' access to City information on making Board of Architects submittals and board meeting information easily accessible to residents online. I had a very interesting conversation this past week with two separate residents who contacted me because they happened to be walking through the neighborhood and they saw a sign in front -- a very small sign in front of a residential property and they wanted to find out exactly what was going on in their neighborhood. I wanted to make everyone aware that the City already does a very good job in regards to large commercial projects where, unlike before, now you can go onto our website under -- correct me if I'm wrong, Madam City Manager -- development and really read about and understand and review site plans and proposed projects before -- as they're going through the approval process and before it even makes it to Commission. That's something that's new that really gives business owners and residents the ability to understand what's proposed in their City. But we don't have that for smaller projects that are going on in residential neighborhoods. What I want to be very careful and what I want to make sure that everyone is aware that I'm not requesting that private information, like floor plans or personal information be given. But I think that it would be a good idea for individuals who want to find out, for example, what's going on in my neighborhood, on Lisbon -- excuse me, on Urbino, excuse me, that they have an understanding of, you know, next to my home there's going to be a proposed home to be built or it's going to be an addition or it's going to be a pool of some sort, something very simple that gets to the point, but that doesn't expose anybody in regards to their private information. And I wanted to see if you had an interest and if that was something that we could incorporate.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Mayor, if I could explain what we have now. What we do now is that we do post the Board of Architects' agenda, which has a brief description of the project. Now, the description is brief. We could probably expand on that. The next level of information would be a PDF that shows the drawings and that may raise some of the issues of privacy, et cetera, so...

Commissioner Lago: I don't want any drawings. That's not my point. I like it as brief as possible. What I would like to have is, let's say that when someone goes and walks by a residential, you know, area and sees a sign up that says this property's coming before the Board of Architecture (sic), that it states "Go to our City website under this following link" just to read the understanding of what's going on.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes.

Commissioner Lago: And the description could be something as simple as "addition, new construction, pool," just something simple and to the point so that that person understands what's being proposed in their neighborhood. A lot of people drive by those signs. Number one, the signs are very small. I think they're probably three inches by three inches. You don't even see them. And number two, it's not as easy as going to the site and reviewing the commercial projects that are being proffered because those are -- give you a real in depth idea of what's being proposed.

Mayor Cason: So, for more information, see...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah. I think the solution is to expand the description a little bit more so we have more precise information right at the site.

Commissioner Lago: But is that available on the website?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes, but that's the agenda...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: The photographs and the renderings and those kinds of things that you're talking about, are they included?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: No.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: No, and so I think that's what you're also talking about.

Commissioner Lago: Yeah, but I want to be careful.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: But what I heard was -- and what I heard was, was that you do not want the drawings posted.

Commissioner Lago: No.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: What you want is an expanded description of the project.

Commissioner Lago: Yes.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: I would -- Commissioner, you may want the exterior elevations included, but not the floor plans.

Commissioner Lago: Yeah, and I also want to be clear. I looked on the website and I couldn't find -- not saying it's not there. It is there; it has to be if you say it's there. I just couldn't find -- and I want to make it as easy as possible because the two residents that came to see me said, oh, when I looked up the information, I found the larger downtown commercial projects that are being brought forth before the Commission, DRC or BOA...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: At DRC we have the full PDF attached...

Mayor Cason: So why not just put on the sign, for more information, go to City web page...

Commissioner Lago: Coral Gables...

Mayor Cason: Look under X, Y and Z?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Okay.

Commissioner Lago: That'd be a good idea.

Mayor Cason: That'll do it.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Alright, we'll work on it. Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Alright.

Commissioner Lago: Thank you, Ramon. I appreciate it.

Mayor Cason: Thank you.

Commissioner Lago: That'll work.